(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Pakistan's ISI network has been giving assistance to the militants in Kashmir; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to make use of the same at the United Nations?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government has seen and responded to the report of the International Commission of Jurists entitled "Human Rights in Kashmir", which states that Simla Agreement is clearly binding on Pakistan and deprives the Pakistan Government of locus standi to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir. The report also states that it is clear that the Pakistani security service (the *1ST)* has been giving active assistance to the militants. The Government has noted these points in its comments on ICJ mission's report. Government remains committed to discussing differences with Pakistani bilaterally under the framework of the Simla Agreement.

Crass-Border Movement of Pilgrims between India and Pakistan

6198. SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to stater

(a) how many Indian pilgrims visited Pakistan during the last three years and so far in the current year;

(b) how many Pakistani Hindu/Sikh pilgrims visited India during the same period;

whether Government of India propose to take up with the Pakistan Government this importance of increasing cross-border movement of pilgrims from both the countries as a possible way of narrowing down the wedge between India and Pakistan as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 17th April, 1995 under the caption "More cross-border visit* urged"; and

(d) if so, by when talks are proposed to be held and where and which level, whether Foreign Secretary level or at the top level like SAARC?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) According to available information, approximately 7190, 5760, 5370 and 1970 Indian pilgrims visited Pakistan in the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 respectively.

(b) During the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 approximate number of Pakistani pilgrims who visited India has been 180, 80, 420 and 580 respectively.

(c) Government in pursuit of greater people-to-people contact, have taken up the matter of opening up more religious shrines in Pakistan and India to visiting pilgrims from the two countries.

Pakistan, regrettably, has adopted a restrictive visa regime even for those religious jathas that visit Pakistan as part of the Indo-Pak Protocol on Religious Shrines, 1974.

Government have specificaLy proposed that the Sub-commission IV of the Indo-Pak Joint Commission, which deals with visa-related matters as well as other issues under the 1974 Protocol, be immediately re-convened. Pakistan has not yet responded positively to this suggestion.

(d) Government have repeatedly conveyed to Pakistan in the recent period its readiness to hold unconditional bilateral talks at any level to address the entire range of issues between the two countries. Government would urge Pakistan to respond with sincerity to our offer for talks.

Haj Pilgrim visiting Mecca

6199. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Haj Pilgrims visiting Mecca every year and the